

Agnew Calls News Reports Of World Tour Inaccurate

Washington

Spiro T. Agnew and his press secretary, Victor Gold, yesterday criticized news reports of the Vice President's recent world tour. Agnew called them inaccurate and biased. Gold cited "sloppy, rotten reporting."

In an interview for the Christian Science Monitor, Agnew said his main criticism of the coverage was that some reporters "sought to determine not only what my assignment was, but how I should execute it."

Singling out Life and Newsweek magazines, Gold listed what he called journalistic "cheap shots" at the Vice President at every stop — including a visit to an African game preserve where two rhinos copulated.

'BIASED'

Agnew characterized reports of his global trip as "quite inaccurate and frankly biased to a great extent."

"Some of the reporters traveling with me were dismayed that I didn't provide more of what is known as a color event," Agnew told the Monitor, "why I didn't stop and talk to some of the deprived people on the outskirts of Rabat, for example, or why I didn't show some concern about the poverty I encountered along the way."

"I can answer that by simply saying that when one is on a diplomatic mission, it requires that he be in good communication with the heads of government he is dealing with and with administrative people, and I can't imagine that great publicity attending the dramatization of what many people would call weaknesses in various countries would assist my diplomatic assignment."

Also, said Agnew, the cost of the trip had been exagger-

ated in the press.

Told about Gold's remarks, a spokesman for Life commented only: "Very interesting."

Newsweek editors were not immediately available for comment.

REBUTTAL

Gold, saying he had not asked the Vice President's permission to get his rebuttal of press reports on the record, said:

"Much of what was written was not because of mere hostility to his (Agnew's) non-conformist concepts. I understand the needs of the traveling press to file regularly. I don't object to most of what is written unless it is grossly unfair."

"But some of the press group told me a Newsweek piece, for example, was one of the shoddiest pieces of journalism imaginable. It was scavenger journalism and they came up with what scavengers usually get, garbage."

Gold also rebutted a report by Life that the Agnew trip cost \$1.2 million, saying that while no firm figure could be established, the cost could have been nowhere near that high.

He also said there were

only 45 to 50 persons in Agnew's entourage, rather than 141 given in some accounts, and that three airplanes were used, not four.

Gold criticized Newsweek in particular for its account of the Agnew party's visit to a game preserve in Kenya, where the scenery included two rhinos copulating. Noting that Newsweek reported Agnew there with his attractive secretary, Gold said about 35 persons were on hand and that it was "in very poor taste to single the secretary out." (A story on Agnew's secretary is on Page 18.)

Saying that it was not Agnew's intent to "exploit" his trip for news and picture coverage, Gold said:

"It was an official mission for the President of the United States like those performed by Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey when they were Vice President. The mission was to seek chiefs of state and high-ranking officials and it is not appropriate for the Vice President, who has no direct responsibility for foreign policy, to discuss with reporters the substance of what was said with these leaders of other nations."

United Press